

THE OTTER

THE NEWSLETTER OF OTTERBOURNE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL.



Dear Families

Just when you think it's safe to plan a full school week, we are looking forward to another long weekend! When we come back on Tuesday, our Year 4 children will head off to Stubbington for their first residential. We all hope they have the experience of a lifetime. My thanks to all of the staff who put in lots of extra time to arrange the residential and for spending time away from home to ensure the children stay safe and have a great time.

Following Stubbington, there will be a change in Sparrow Class with Mr Smith stepping in as class teacher. Mrs Whitwham will be away from school for the rest of the term for health reasons. For anyone who knows Mrs Whitwham, you can imagine how different the school will be in her absence. We all wish her the very best and we are already looking forward to seeing her back at school in September.

Now we are in May, we are on the final countdown to the May Fayre, which we hope will once again be the highlight of the school calendar. Thank you to everyone who has volunteered to help - we genuinely could not do it without you. We do still have a few gaps in the plan for the day, so if you think you could help, please contact school or a member of our FOS.

Best wishes

Mr Geraghty

HOT OFF THE PRESS

I have just been handed two small slips of paper with the names of this year's May King and May Queen. I am overjoyed to be able to share with you that this year, our 'royal family' are both from Hedgehog Class (Year 2).

Well done to Astrid and Edward! I am really looking forward to you opening the May Fayre and helping to judge the cake competition. It all happens on May 17th.

FESTIVAL PRIZE!

Here's your chance to win an amazing family weekend ticket to Camp Bestival Dorset 2025!

Taking place at Lulworth Castle between July 31st and 3rd August, you'll get to enjoy an incredible festival weekend with a family ticket for 2 adults and up to 4 children.

Enter our raffle for your chance to win this amazing prize.



<https://www.pta-events.co.uk/friendsotterbourne/index.cfm>

This year, the Drama Club includes around 80 children from across Key Stage 2. Rehearsals are well underway and the standard of the individual performances is incredibly impressive already...as is the choir! You can now buy tickets for either (or both) performances to enjoy an evening of entertainment in Old Baghdad.



Date(s)
Tue 17 June 25,
Wed 18 June 25



Production Company:
Otterbourne Church of England
Primary School



Ticket Prices: [https://thorndenhall.ticketsolve.com/
shows/873670809/events](https://thorndenhall.ticketsolve.com/shows/873670809/events)

£5.00 - £7.00



THE HOLT GARDEN

If you haven't yet had a chance to see what our Holt children are creating, along with the adults, please try and take a look next time you are in school! It's inside the main double gate but as far as any details are concerned, I'll leave it to you to see this amazing work in progress (and there will be a photo in the newsletter once everything is completed).

In the hot weather

I have been asked this week about children being able to bring personal fans in to school. Sadly, the nature of schools means that there is always a chance that things brought in from home can get broken. For this reason, I ask that children don't bring fans in to school, unless there is a medical reason to have one, which should be discussed with the office. We will have electric fans in classrooms to help with temperature control and will also ensure children spend time in the shade during break and lunch time if necessary. Also, unless they are needed for medical reasons (or are part of a prescription pair), children shouldn't wear sunglasses at school. A long-peaked cap is perfect on sunny days though. Thank you.

Climbing after school.

During the week, a child was observed climbing over the green fence to get to parents at pick-up time. There are clearly dangers associated with this, so please ensure your children leave school through the main green gate. Thank you.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

SAFETY ON THE ROAD

Traffic-related incidents are a significant risk for young pedestrians and cyclists, so understanding road safety is crucial for children's wellbeing. While all road users share responsibility for keeping one another safe, this guide offers strategies for empowering young people to navigate the roads confidently and responsibly.

1 TAKE PRACTICE JOURNEYS

Making 'practice' journeys with children is a great way to help them stay safe, thereby modelling responsible behaviours and having road safety conversations as they prepare to travel independently. Add hazard perception activities like spotting electric vehicles – which may have a green number plate – and point out how quiet they are. Children learn by watching others; remind them that their peers might not always be the best role models.

2 BE BRIGHT, BE SEEN

Visibility is lower during darker winter days, and drivers need to take extra care to look out for pedestrians. Wearing bright and reflective clothing can help make children more visible to drivers near roads. In poor daylight conditions, encourage children to wear light, bright or fluorescent clothing. When it's dark, wear reflective clothing or materials such as a reflective armband or jacket.

3 EYES UP

Encourage children to look up and keep their eyes on the road. Teach them to constantly watch for traffic and practise double-checking the road before crossing – looking right, left and then right again.

4 LIMIT DISTRACTIONS

Where possible, devices like phones should be kept away from children while out and about near roads. If they're carrying devices, these should be put away until they've reached their destination. Children must also avoid playing with toys or being distracted by friends. If a friend wants to show them something funny on their phone, there'll be time for that once they've safely arrived.

5 SLOW DOWN

Discuss the importance of waiting instead of crossing immediately. It can be tricky to judge the speed of traffic and spot obstacles that could cause a trip or a fall. For safety, children must stop and think before they get to the kerb and should always walk – not run – when crossing the road. They should avoid crossing until they're certain they have plenty of time. Even if traffic seems a long way off, it could still be approaching very quickly.

6 STOP BEFORE THE KERB

Teach children to stop before reaching the kerb – not right at the edge of it. Halting before they get to the kerb allows them to see if anything's coming, whereas getting too close to traffic is dangerous. If there's no pavement, children should stand back from the road's edge but ensure they can still see approaching traffic.

7 CROSS SAFELY

Children should always find a safe spot to cross the road, prioritising zebra crossings or pelican crossings, footbridges and subways. Find a place where they can see traffic coming from both directions. Avoid crossing near junctions, bends in the road, or obstacles that block their view. Instead moving to somewhere they can see and be seen. Remind them to use their eyes and ears together when checking the road, as sometimes they can hear traffic before they can see it. Looking and listening while crossing helps them quickly spot traffic, including cyclists and motorcyclists driving between other vehicles.

8 PARKED VEHICLES

Crossing between parked vehicles is very dangerous. Teach children to use extra caution if crossing in this way, and, ideally, avoid it altogether. They should use the outside edge of a vehicle as if it were the kerb, waiting and checking for traffic before moving. They should ensure vehicles aren't about to move, by looking for drivers in the vehicles and listening for engines running – but remember that electric vehicles may move off silently. They should always make sure there is a gap between any parked vehicles on the other side, so they can reach the pavement.

9 REVERSING VEHICLES

Children must never cross behind a reversing vehicle – it's extremely dangerous. Remind them to look for white reversing lights and listen out for warning sounds. Can they hear the engine sound or a radio playing inside the vehicle?

10 WAIT FOR THE BUS TO LEAVE

When getting off a bus, children must wait for it to leave before crossing so they can have a clear view of the road in both directions. This also allows them to see and be seen by other road users. Crossing near large vehicles is particularly dangerous and should be avoided.

Meet Our Expert

THINK! is a year-round national campaign that aims to encourage safe road behaviours – whether we're driving, cycling, horse riding or walking – with the aim of reducing the number of people killed and injured on the UK's roads each year. Find out more at: <https://www.think.gov.uk/education-resources/>



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THE OTTER

THE NEWSLETTER OF OTTERBOURNE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL.



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT!

Here are some of the important items from previous newsletters.

Here is a little more information about those red envelopes that came home this week, containing important details about a special event we'll be participating in over the next five weeks. Each child will be learning a dance routine, and we invite you to join us on **Friday, 23rd May** for the final performance, where the children will showcase their collaborative efforts. More details will be shared as the event approaches.

Throughout the coming weeks, the children will practice the routine during class or as part of their PE warm-ups, gradually building up to the final performance. If your child would like to practice at home, they can follow along with the instructional video using this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBXXhuc_CwA.

The performance only video can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RbSO88QLzs0>

As part of this event, we're aiming to raise funds for a great cause. The children can be sponsored for their participation either on paper or online and details of how to do this are included in the red envelope.

60% of the funds raised will benefit the Diabetes Research and Wellness Foundation, while the remaining **40% will support our school**. Every contribution counts and will make a difference!

Thank you for your support, and we look forward to seeing you at the performance!

Warm regards,

Zoe Simpson

Personal Development Co-Ordinator



A SCHOOL FUNDRAISING COLLABORATION
DANCE
FOR DIABETES



Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s),

Whether you are part of a returning school or new to us, welcome!

This term your school have partnered with Hampshire based Charity **Diabetes Research & Wellness Foundation** (DRWF) and **FunKidz Dance**, working together on a school fundraising and awareness initiative called **Dance for Diabetes**.

Over the next five weeks, the children will be learning a simple, choreographed dance routine to a popular song, in bitesize sections per week. Teachers will lead this during school hours, in lessons such as PE, so there will be no need to learn the dance yourself, unless you wish to (available on school platforms). Your child will then come together with the whole school and perform this during the last week of this term.

Most schools will be holding a non-school uniform day at the end of term to celebrate the conclusion of the initiative and we are asking all children to attend in something colourful and comfortable that you already own.

How can we join in and fundraise?

Our red enveloped information & fundraising pack will be sent home during the first week of summer term and everything you need will be in this pack. We have made getting involved super easy this year. You will find a QR code / link to create your child's online fundraising page (or a sponsorship form for those wishing to donate cash).

Plus, don't forget to encourage your child to colour in the sponsorship return envelope for an extra chance to win one of 10 x £10 Smyths Toys vouchers.

Does this challenge benefit our school?

Your donations will be split into two. 60% will be donated to DRWF, whilst 40% will be donated and reinvested back into our school. This means you will be fundraising to support people living with diabetes as well as benefiting your school financially.

I hope your child is as excited about this opportunity as we are.

Tim Green

Head of Community Fundraising

Diabetes Research & Wellness Foundation
02392 637808 / fundraising@drwf.org.uk



Registered Charity No: 1070607 - Registered in England
Company No: 03496304
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What Parents & Educators Need to Know about SEARCH ENGINES

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Search engines are an integral part of everyday life – with Google alone processing around 100,000 searches every second. Search engines use algorithms to predict which results will be useful to us, though this can expose children to inappropriate content, misinformation and even scams. This guide explains the risks associated with search engines and offers practical advice to help safeguard young users online.

MANIPULATED SEARCH RESULTS

Although search engines take site reputation into account, trustworthiness isn't the main factor. Instead, they use algorithms that can be gamed via tactics like search engine optimisation (SEO), which is big business. As a result, users may encounter misleading content and low-quality commercial products that appear more credible than they actually are.

MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION

Search engines index billions of web pages – and not all of them are factual or safe. Children might stumble across false information or even deliberate disinformation, especially when searching for trending topics or controversial issues.

ENGINES BEYOND GOOGLE

Even if Google's SafeSearch is enabled, children may use lesser-known search engines that don't have similar protections. Some of these alternatives are less effective at blocking unsavoury content – sometimes by design – making it easier for children to encounter harmful or explicit material. Parental controls may also struggle to detect and block these sites.

FUNNY JOKES

ILLEGAL CONTENT CAN SURFACE

Search engines are designed to retrieve content based on keywords – not to judge whether that content is lawful. As a result, even illegal or harmful material can appear in search results. Children might assume that anything found through search engines must be safe, just because they're so widely used. This misunderstanding can lead to accidental exposure to seriously inappropriate content.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT EXPOSURE

Although parental controls like Google's SafeSearch exist, they aren't foolproof, and search engines may bypass them. Young users may still see inappropriate images or content, especially in image searches, even though they may not be able to click on the results. Some niche search engines lack even basic filtering, posing further risks.

UNRELIABLE AI SUMMARIES

Some search engines now offer AI-generated answers at the top of results. While these can be helpful as webpage summaries, they're not always accurate. There have been instances where AI summaries have presented false or even dangerous information, reinforcing the need for critical thinking.

Advice for Parents & Educators

ACTIVATE PARENTAL CONTROLS

While no parental controls tool is perfect, this software can help reduce the likelihood of inappropriate content appearing in search results. Use tools like Google Family Link to set search restrictions and monitor your child's browsing activity.

QUESTION AI-GENERATED CONTENT

While AI content is generated quickly and often appears legitimate, teach children that, just because an AI summary is well presented, it doesn't mean it's accurate. Encourage them to review the sources behind AI summaries and check the information with reputable sites or fact-checkers.

IDENTIFY AND AVOID ADVERTS

One of the ways search engines generate revenue is by showing adverts to their users. Sponsored search results are labelled, but they're not always easy to spot and can sometimes be malicious. Show your child how to distinguish between paid ads and organic search results – explain why some ads might be misleading or unsafe.

PROMOTE DIGITAL LITERACY

Encourage children to question the motivation behind online content and develop critical thinking, as not all sites can be trusted. Some deliberately misinform users in order to sell products or promote misinformation. Developing a critical mindset is one of the best defences against these tactics.

Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard, The Guardian and The New Statesman.



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What Parents & Educators Need to Know about MAKING FRIENDS ONLINE

In today's digital world, it's increasingly common for children to form friendships with people they've never met in person. While online connections can offer children a sense of belonging, they also carry significant risks. Around 19% of children aged 10 to 15 in England and Wales have chatted online with someone they've never met face to face. This guide offers expert advice for parents and educators on helping children navigate online friendships safely.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

ONLINE GROOMING THREATS

Predators can use games, chat apps or social media platforms to build relationships with children and gain their trust. This may quickly develop into grooming or exploitation. Between April 2017 and March 2023, UK police recorded nearly 34,000 online grooming offences – an 82% increase in just five years.

EXPOSURE TO INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Children may encounter distressing or explicit material while interacting with online contacts – especially via TikTok, Instagram or Snapchat. This is evidenced in a survey by the Children's Commissioner for England, which found that 45% of children aged 8 to 17 had seen content online that made them feel uncomfortable, worried or upset.

PRIVACY AND DATA RISKS

Children and young people often overshare personal details – such as where they live or go to school – without understanding the consequences. In fact, 4.4% of 10 to 15-year-olds in the UK have met up in real life with someone they'd only spoken to online.

COMPROMISED PERSONAL SAFETY

Meeting an online 'friend' in real life risks placing a child in serious danger. From abduction to coercion, the consequences can be devastating. Reports of children being harmed after such meetings are becoming increasingly common in the UK, highlighting the need for safeguarding intervention.

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS

Online harm – such as cyberbullying, grooming or exposure to disturbing content – can lead to long-term emotional issues, including anxiety, depression and PTSD. 'Sextortion' gangs, who threaten to release sexual information about a person unless they pay them money, have reportedly targeted children as young as 11, leaving them traumatised and ashamed.

LONG-TERM REPERCUSSIONS

Children exposed to harmful online relationships early on may develop unhealthy beliefs about relationships, consent, or self-worth. In a recent case, a 28-year-old posed as a girl on Snapchat to befriend children aged 10 to 16, manipulating them into sexual activity and causing profound emotional distress. One 12-year-old tragically died by suicide, highlighting the long-term psychological harm online friendships with strangers can cause.

26 FRIENDS ONLINE NOW

Advice for Parents & Educators

TEACH SAFE ONLINE HABITS

Help children understand how to use privacy settings, protect their personal information, spot fake profiles, and report anything suspicious or concerning, like pressure tactics. Encourage them to think critically about what they share – and whom they're talking to.

KEEP CONVERSATIONS OPEN

Let children know they can talk to you about their online life. Avoid reacting with anger or judgement, as this may prevent them from opening up in the future. A child who feels listened to is more likely to disclose problems before they escalate.

ENCOURAGE REAL-WORLD CONNECTIONS

Support children in building friendships through school, clubs, hobbies and activities in the real world. Strong offline relationships help reduce children's reliance on online platforms for social interaction, and can help them develop resilience and social confidence.

USE PARENTAL CONTROLS

Parental control settings on devices, games and apps can help manage screen time, filter out inappropriate content, and monitor activity. While no system is perfect, they provide a valuable layer of protection as children explore digital spaces.

Meet Our Expert

Gabriella Russo is a safeguarding consultant with over 30 years' experience in supporting children, families, and adults across education, local authority, and mental health settings – both in the UK (including at Parliamentary level) and internationally.



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What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

ZEPETO



ZEPETO is a fast-growing app blending social networking with a virtual world experience – attracting around 20 million monthly users, with 15% from Europe. Players create 3D avatars to explore immersive environments, play games and interact with others; however, with minimal safety controls, anonymous chat and monetised content, ZEPETO poses a number of online safety concerns that parents and educators should be aware of.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

NO PARENTAL CONTROLS



Although ZEPETO is intended for users aged 14 and up, it lacks built-in parental controls or age verification, instead relying on safety features on the device it's played on. This lack of a parental controls feature raises concerns about whom children may be interacting with on the platform.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT



As a mix between a virtual world and a social media platform, ZEPETO features a wide range of user-generated content. Some areas may reference mature themes, such as TV series aimed at adults, or include inappropriate material created by other users – all of which children may stumble across without warning.

STRANGER DANGER



By default, users can message and interact with anyone else. This open communication creates an environment where predatory individuals can pose as peers to gain trust, potentially leading to grooming, scams, and exploitation, such as blackmail.

Hi there...

CYBERBULLYING RISKS



As with many social platforms, children can be targeted for bullying, harassment or exclusion by both strangers and their peers. Unfiltered chat and avatar-based interaction can allow bullying and other forms of harassment to continue, impacting children's wellbeing and mental health.

ADDICTIVE GAMEPLAY



Daily log-in rewards, such as coins, and in-game incentives can encourage compulsive behaviour, with some users feeling pressure to check in constantly to avoid missing out. This can lead to excessive screen time and conflict with schoolwork or offline hobbies or commitments.

SPENDING REAL MONEY



While the game is free to play, ZEPETO includes a store offering virtual clothing and accessories for avatars. These items are bought with 'ZEMS' – a paid currency – and the appeal of exclusive items or branded collaborations can make it easy for children to overspend.

Advice for Parents & Educators

ENABLE PRIVACY SETTINGS



Visit the child's profile settings to restrict who can send messages – options include Everyone, Followers Only, or No-one. Encourage children to avoid sharing any personal information on their profile, as this is visible even on private accounts.

CONTROL SPENDING



To prevent accidental purchases, set up purchase approval systems such as Apple's Ask to Buy or Google's Purchase Approvals. Alternatively, consider removing payment methods or using pre-paid cards with set budgets.

LIMIT IN-APP TIME



Use parental controls on Android (Google Family Link) or iOS (Screen Time) to restrict app usage by setting hours or daily limits. Encouraging breaks can help children develop healthier habits and reduce app dependency.

HAVE REGULAR CONVERSATIONS



Talk openly with children about whom they interact with online and the kinds of things they see or experience. Encourage them to speak up if someone makes them uncomfortable or if they come across inappropriate content. Teach them how to recognise red-flag behaviours such as asking for secrets, giving gifts, or requesting personal information.

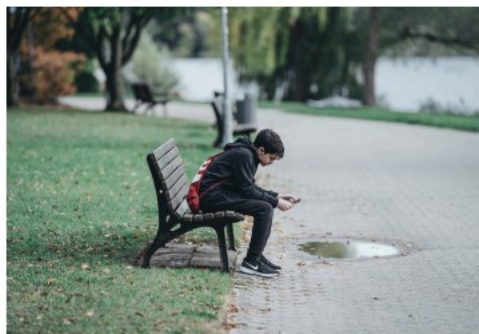
Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, The Telegraph, The Evening Standard, The Guardian and The New Statesman.





'Adolescence' TV show highlighted the issues



What is INCEL culture?
Isolation and rejection
Lack of positive role models
Over dependence on Smart phones
Screen addiction
Vulnerability to online bullying
Influenced by negative role models
Toxic websites
Violent behaviour & misogyny

Emotional Resilience for our Children Online Talk for Parents

from FACE Family Advice £24

email Jane Keyworth, FACE Lead Facilitator

info@facefamilyadvice.co.uk



Saturday 3rd May 10:00-11:30

Thursday 8th May 19:00-20:30



Talks are recorded and available for 48 hours after each talk

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

INSTAGRAM

AGE RESTRICTION
13+

Instagram remains one of the world's most popular social media platforms, especially among teens – with around 70% of 13 to 17-year-olds using it. Owned by Meta, Instagram allows users to share photos and videos, create interactive 'stories', broadcast live, send private messages and follow others. With regular updates and new features, it's essential for parents and educators to stay informed about how children are using the app – and what the risks are.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

EXCESSIVE SCREEN TIME

Instagram's design encourages prolonged use through endless scrolling of trending content and generating a fear of missing out (FOMO). Children can quickly lose track of time browsing posts from friends, influencers, and strangers, which may disrupt their day-to-day activities.

AI CHATBOT CONCERNS

Meta's AI, which is available on Instagram, allows users to chat with an in-app chatbot. While often helpful, it can blur boundaries for young users, who may ask for or read content that is inappropriate or see it as a real friend or confidant. Privacy issues also arise, as conversations may not be as secure or private as children assume.

RISKS OF GOING LIVE

The livestream feature allows real-time broadcasting to followers – or anyone, if the account is public. This increases the chance of unwanted contact from strangers and pressure to act in ways that gain attention, including engaging in inappropriate behaviour. Viewers may also post offensive or harmful comments during live sessions.

THREADS INTEGRATION

Threads is Instagram's sister app for public, text-based conversations. Posts from Threads appear in users' Instagram feeds and can lead children to view, share, and comment on public conversations with strangers. The content may not always be age-appropriate and can be misleading or false.

SCHEDULED MESSAGING

Instagram's newer ability to schedule direct messages means that children could receive messages late at night or early in the morning. This can disrupt their sleep or keep them preoccupied before the school day even begins.

EXCLUSION AND LOW SELF-WORTH

Feeling left out online can have a real emotional impact. Being left out of photos, receiving fewer likes, being unfollowed, or being ignored in chats and comments can leave children feeling excluded, which often hurts as much as in real life. There is a risk this can lead to reduced self-esteem and a sense of not belonging.

Advice for Parents & Educators

USE INSTAGRAM'S SUPERVISION TOOLS

Instagram's built-in Family Centre lets parents monitor how much time their child spends on the app. Specialised 'teen accounts' are private by default and offer controls on who can message them. Make sure that children use their real age when registering their account to ensure they have these protections.

OPEN UP THE CONVERSATION

Talk regularly to the children in your care about what they enjoy on Instagram – and what makes them uncomfortable. Encourage honest chats about filters, body image, and online approval. Reassure them that they don't need to edit their appearance or chase 'likes' to feel valued.

SET BOUNDARIES FOR THREADS AND AI

Parental controls on Instagram also apply to Threads. These allow parents to monitor time spent in the app, check follower lists and adjust exposure to sensitive content. Discuss AI features, too, therefore helping children understand that chatbots aren't real people and should be used with care.

BE MEDIA-SAVVY WITH INFLUENCERS

Parents should follow a few of the influencers their child watches, so they can better understand the content they're seeing. Use this as a springboard to talk about the difference between genuine recommendations and paid promotions – and how online personalities can shape opinions and behaviour.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



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What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

ROBLOX



Roblox is one of the most popular video games among children. In 2020, the game's developers claimed that more than half of the USA's children had played it. As a 'sandbox' title, the game lets players create their own gaming experiences with Roblox Studio to build custom levels, which can then be shared online.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

ONLINE PLAY RISKS

Because Roblox connects random players across the world, it can put younger players into an environment with anonymous users who could use the platform for nefarious reasons. For example, some role-play games are used for online dates and mature role play, which could expose youngsters to inappropriate messages in the public chat box.

MATURE CONTENT

Content is difficult to moderate throughout Roblox, due to the number of games available. This is particularly notable on smaller games and experiences, but in summary, some of the games and experiences offered on the platform contain age-inappropriate content that could easily be seen by young players.

IN-GAME SPENDING

The majority of games within Roblox have extensive monetisation options, usually through season passes or microtransactions. Purchases can range in value from a few pennies up to much larger sums of money. While some games offer a lot of content via purchases, others can offer very little for real world money, causing younger players to end up out of pocket.

ANONYMOUS PLAYERS

The anonymity of users can leave players vulnerable to bullying, harassment, and predatory behaviour. Without the right parental controls or monitoring, users can connect with each other via personal messages or friend requests, and it is very difficult to know who's behind a username in this vast online world.

RISK OF ADDICTION

Roblox games can feature rewarding or satisfying mechanics that keep players coming back – or persuade them to stay logged-in for much longer. Like most games, they focus on interactivity, with constant rewards via in-game unlocks and currencies, which can sometimes lead to an addictive need to remain online for long periods of time.

SCAMS

Many of the games on Roblox feature collectible items, pets, or characters. These objects, while digital, are worth a lot of real money on certain online markets. Scammers will attempt to trade with younger users in the hopes of getting rare items that can be sold for real money, manipulating the child into handing them over, usually via misleading information.

Advice for Parents & Educators

MONITOR THE CONTENT

While Roblox does implement plenty of moderation tools and parental controls, it's up to parents and guardians to monitor the types of games a child or impressionable player is experiencing. If a youngster wants to play Roblox, be sure to check out which specific games they want to play within it, and get a good idea of their content.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TOOLS

Use the parental controls within the game itself and teach youngsters how to report and block other players. Knowing the powers within their reach will make Roblox a safer, happier experience. You can set age ranges for who's allowed to contact you, close public chat boxes, block spending, and even make your Roblox profile completely private. All these options are helpful in cutting off bad actors from engaging with children.

PLAY TOGETHER

Consider playing Roblox with the children in your care. There are few more effective ways to see how monetisation works, gauge whether the game could lead to addictive behaviours, or even witness how interaction between players works, than sitting down and trying the game for yourself. This should help you figure out whether it's suitable for particular children.

TEACH ONLINE BEHAVIOURS

Have an open conversation about the risks of online play and how to spend money wisely. By being honest and giving tips on how a younger user can protect themselves, you can empower them to not only take care of themselves, but others too. Any user can be reported to Roblox moderators by other players for behaving inappropriately. With this knowledge, younger players can be aware of what to look for and help prevent it.

Meet Our Expert

Dan Lipscombe is a videogame journalist and author of over 20 books on gaming, including books on Minecraft, Fortnite, Roblox, and more. For 15 years he has been writing about his passion for gaming. When he's not playing games, he's talking about them at GAMINGbible.



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